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LITERARY TEXT TRANSLATION

英汉文学语篇翻译中的
连贯问题研究

杨 林 著



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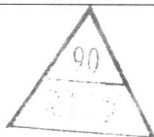
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|| PREFACE ||

In this book, I have done a contrastive study of various grammatical cohesive devices and their functions in constructing a unified coherent text in English and Chinese. Based on a systematic analysis of the features of coherence constructed by various grammatical cohesive devices in both English and Chinese literary texts, as an important feature of text, this book explores the possibility of inter-lingual translation at text level between English and Chinese, the potential problems, and possible solutions to them.

In the first chapter, the purpose, rationale, scope and significance of the book are specified. In the second chapter of literature review, a brief theoretical review of coherence is made. The merits and demerits of various theories of coherence i.e. Halliday and Hasan's Theory of Register and Cohesion, Van Dijk's Theories of Macrostructures (1977), Widdowson Illocutionary Acts Theory (1978), Danes and Fries' Themat-ic Progression Theory (1974), and Brown and Yule's Cognitive Frame Theory (1983) are evaluated respectively.

In the third chapter, coherence, as an important feature of text is discussed and the relationship between cohesion and co-



herence is elaborated. Cohesion is a semantic relations and it is overtly signaled. Cohesion contributes a lot to the coherence of a text. A text with cohesive relations is normally a coherent one. Various cohesive relations that are overtly displayed by formal features often contribute to the coherence of a text. However it cannot be said that a text with good cohesive devices is necessarily a coherent one. On the other hand, a text without good cohesion can be a coherent one. Register is also a semantic concept. It is a particular situational configuration of field, mode and tenor. It is closely associated with the context of situation and relates text with the context, enabling cohesion to conform to coherence. The interpretation of the coherence of a text is subjected to the context of situation.

The fourth chapter is a general contrastive study of various grammatical cohesive devices, i.e. reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunctions, and their functions in constructing a unified coherent text in English and Chinese. English enjoys a higher frequency of pronominal reference in building the cohesive ties in a text, making the text coherent, whereas in Chinese, where pronouns are used much more sparingly, the continuity of reference is achieved by omitting the subjects of following sentences. From the point of view of textual cohesion, substitution is mainly endophoric and the vast majority of all instances are anaphoric, although we come across the possibility of cataphoric substitution under certain circumstances. Substitution results in linguistic brevity. Though three types of substitution, i.e. nominal substitution, verbal substitution and clausal substitution can be found in both English and Chinese texts, they are different from each other here and there. Like substitution, ellipsis is a form of relation between clauses and sentences, where it is an



important feature of the essential texture. Therefore ellipsis plays a part of grammatical cohesion. Unlike reference, substitution and ellipsis, conjunction is a logico-semantic relations holding between elements of a text. Conjunctions are cohesive not in themselves, but in the specific meanings they express. In a text, conjunctions perform functions which relate each element of a text by its logico-semantic relations. Comparatively, since English is a hypotactic language, conjunction is shown explicitly, while in Chinese it is expressed implicitly since Chinese is a paratactic language.

In the fifth chapter, case studies of coherence of inter-lingual translation between English and Chinese are presented and potential problems in achieving coherence in inter-lingual translation (English and Chinese in particular) translation are explored and corresponding solutions are suggested. For example, in English-Chinese translation, pronouns are often translated into nouns with the same referents or simply omitted to avoid repetition and achieve clarity. The last chapter is the conclusion of the thesis. Though they are two different languages belonging to different language families, English and Chinese have something in common as far as some of the grammatical cohesive devices and their functions in constructing a unified coherent text are concerned. Inter-lingual translation between English and Chinese at the text level is to a great extent feasible though various grammatical devices and their functions in constructing a unified coherent text vary here and there.

— 导 读 —

连贯作为语篇的一个重要特征，在不同的语言中有各自不同的实现方式。英、汉两种语言尽管属于不同的语系，但在语篇建构方面有一定的相似性。在本书中，作者通过对语法衔接手段及其建构英、汉文学语篇连贯的特点与作用异同的对比，系统分析了连贯作为语篇的特征在英、汉文学语篇中的不同体现，探讨了英、汉文学语篇在英、汉语际翻译中连贯的可行性及其过程中存在的问题与拟解决办法。

第一章引言中，说明了本书的研究目的、理由、范围及意义。第二章是文献综述，主要介绍了目前国内外一些重要的有关语篇连贯的理论，比如韩礼德和哈桑的语域加衔接理论，凡·戴克的宏观结构理论，威多逊的言外行为理论，丹尼士的主位推进理论，布朗和俞尔的心理框架理论等，并分析了他们对语篇连贯研究的贡献及不足之处。尽管这些理论都试图从不同侧面来揭示影响和决定语篇连贯的诸多因素，但到目前为止还没有哪家理论能够全面系统地解释语篇连贯。相对而言，韩礼德和哈桑的语域加衔接理论是比较系统的，但还在不断发展完善之中。

第三章讨论了连贯作为语篇的重要特征在英、汉语篇中的不同体现，同时探讨了衔接、连贯以及语域的关系问题。通常而言，在语篇内部有衔接机制的语篇是连贯的语篇，但这

并不意味着没有内部衔接机制的语篇就不是连贯的语篇。事实上,内部衔接机制看似完美的语篇可能并不是连贯的。语篇连贯的解释可以涉及语篇内部衔接机制以外的其他因素。语域作为一个重要的语义概念,把语篇和语境联系起来,使衔接与连贯的关系得到更为合理的解释。语篇的连贯不只是取决于语篇内部的衔接机制,还和语境有密切的关系。

第四章对比了英、汉语篇语法衔接手段及其在建构连贯语篇作用的异同。指称、替代、省略及连接等语法衔接手段在建构英、汉文学语篇连贯方面有相同之处,也有不同之处。就指称衔接而言,英语更倾向于使用代词来建立语篇衔接机制,汉语中代词出现的频率远不如英语那样高,但其功能基本一致。在替代衔接方面,英、汉语中都可以看到名词替代、动词替代、小句替代等语言现象,但它们在衔接功能上有细微差异。与替代不同,省略衔接主要发生在小句与句子层次上。连接衔接的功能并不表现在连接词本身,而在于连接词所体现的小句或句子之间的逻辑关系。英语作为一种形合语言,小句或句子之间的逻辑关系倾向于外显;而汉语作为意合语言,小句或句子之间的逻辑关系则在更多情况下是隐含的,而且英语中连接词的使用较汉语多。

第五章通过英、汉语篇翻译个案对比,探讨了英、汉文学语篇在语际翻译中连贯的可行性及其过程中存在的问题与拟解决办法。基于指称、替代、省略及连接等语法衔接手段在建构英、汉文学语篇连贯方面相似性,英、汉文学语篇在语际翻译中连贯的实现是可行的。但是,这些语法衔接手段在建构英、汉文学语篇连贯方面的差异性,就不可避免地出现语际翻译中的问题。从一定意义上说源语向目的语转换的过程就是源语语法衔接手段使用规则转换为目的语使用规则的过程。最后,在结论中,作者指出,研究英、汉语篇连贯问题的意义在于指导翻译实践。

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1 Introduction

1.1 The Purpose and Rationale of the Study

In this study, I will make a contrastive analysis of features of coherence in both English and Chinese literary text including their grammatical cohesive devices and their functions in constructing a unified coherent text. The study will explore the feasibility of achieving inter-lingual translation between English and Chinese at the text level, the potential problems and possible solutions.

Translation studies, as a branch of linguistics, is closely connected with modern linguistics. On the one hand, the development of modern linguistics can provide insights into translation studies. On the other hand, translation studies, as a new discipline, needs to draw on new findings in modern linguistics. This is particularly true of text-linguistics. Traditionally, translation studies focused on equivalence below text level, i.e. on how to find the equivalent of a source language item in the target language text in terms of meaning. However, with the development of

modern linguistics, especially that of text-linguistics, linguists and translation studies scholars (1960s) began to explore the feasibility of achieving equivalence at text level with the help of linguistic theories.

Coherence, as an important feature of text, is language-specific. It is displayed in English and Chinese in different ways. More important, coherence is closely connected with cohesion. A great contribution of the coherence of a text comes from cohesion.

A comprehensive research into the coherence and cohesion of English and Chinese texts will enable translators to see clearly the differences and similarities of coherence in the two languages, and to familiarize them with various grammatical cohesive devices and their functions in constructing a unified coherent text. Therefore, it can offer constructive guidance for translation practice and it is thus helpful to inter-lingual translation between English and Chinese.

1.2 The Scope and Significance of the Study

The scope of this study is confined to literary translation. The texts to be selected are classical literary works of modern English and Chinese. Based on the review of various theories on coherence including Halliday and Hasan's Theory of Register and Cohesion, Van Dijk's Theories of Macrostructures (1977), Widowson Illocutionary Acts Theory (1978), Danes and Fries' Thematic Progression Theory (1974), and Brown and Yule's Cognitive Frame Theory (1983) in the second chapter and the elaboration of the relationship between cohesion and coherence in



the third chapter, I will make a contrastive study of various grammatical cohesive devices and their functions in constructing coherent texts in English and Chinese in the fourth chapter. The fifth chapter is case studies of the coherence of inter-lingual translation between English and Chinese. Similarities of various grammatical cohesive devices and their functions in constructing coherent discourse of English and Chinese make it possible the inter-lingual translation between the two languages. The significance of the study is to offer us constructive guidance in inter-lingual translation practice between them.

2 Literature Review

2.1 A General View on Coherence

Coherence was originally not a linguistic concept. It shares the same root with “cohesion” with the meaning of “to cohere”. It was not until the publication of Halliday and Hasan’s *Cohesion in English* in 1976 that people began to pay serious attention to this notion. Since then coherence has gained greater attention in the linguistic circle and the coherence of text has gradually become an important concept.

To some extent, coherence functions as a criterion in language learning, language use, language production, and language re-creation. It can also be used to evaluate the completeness, congruity and the quality of a text.

Since the publication of *Cohesion in English*, much research has been done on the coherence of text. Different scholars hold different views and use different terms, each based on his own theoretical system. For example, Van Dijk (1977), Widdowson (1978), Danes and Fries (1974), and Brown and Yule (1983)

have developed their theories of Macrostructures, Illocutionary Acts Theory, Thematic Progression Theory, and Cognitive Frame Theory respectively, which will be discussed below.

In China, Hu Zhuang-lin (1994, 1996) proposes that tone concord and tone harmony, which show cohesive relations between sequences of tone groups within the text, can also fulfill the function of coherence. He extends the scope of structural cohesion and regarded transitivity and thematic structure as important ways of contributing to the cohesion and coherence of a text. Another scholar, Zhu Yong-sheng (1996) suggests that the coherence of a text depends on both internal and external conditions of the text. All these theoretical modes, despite their own comparatively complete theory frames have their own drawbacks and need to be improved and developed.

2.2 Different Theories on Coherence

2.2.1 Halliday and Hasan's Theory of Register and Cohesion

Halliday and Hasan (1976) propose a theory of Register and Cohesion. According to them, a text is a semantic unit. A text has texture — the property that makes a text different from a disconnected sequence of sentences. Cohesion is a semantic relation between elements in a text. Halliday and Hasan (ibid: 23) further argue:

“The concept of cohesion can therefore be usefully supplanted by that of register, since the two together effectively define a text. A text is a passage of discourse